

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-5, and 10 remain in this application, while claims 2-3, 6-9, and 11 are canceled. New claim 12 is added. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

The allowance of claim 10 is acknowledged with appreciation.

The rejection set forth in section 3 on page 2 of the Office Action is moot since claim 6 is canceled above. All of the claims now in the application fully comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Independent claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), along with various dependent claims, as anticipated by any of German patent document 199 02 056 C1 to Daferner, Japanese patent document 6-348715 to Matsuda et al., and U.S. Patent 6,233,493 to Cherneff et al. Reconsideration is requested. Claim 1 is amended above to specify that the building sequence planning system includes a processing unit including, *inter alia*, initial lead-time and lead-time developing units. Referring by way of example only to Figure 2 of the application, such units are respectively identified by reference numbers 34 and 39. A detailed discussion of one lead-time shifting operation appears, for example, from line 26 on page 40 to line 17 on page 48 of the specification of this application. By way of the lead-time shifting operation discussed, an efficient building sequence can be obtained in a sequence planning system as described in lines 5-8 on page 58 of the specification. Claim 1 additionally requires the processing unit to include a sequence evaluating unit that evaluates the building sequence in a specified manner, as well as an evaluation determining and storing

unit that can decide a building sequence with a minimum penalty based on a particular penalty value.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the Daferner, Matsuda et al., and Cherneff et al. documents discloses a building sequence planning system for an automobile production line comprising a processing unit with initial lead-time and lead-time developing units, a sequence evaluating unit that evaluates the building sequence in a specified manner, and an evaluation determining and storing unit as currently amended claim 1 particularly requires. Neither the secondary references relied on by the Examiner in sections 7 and 8 of the Office Action nor anything else noted by the Examiner, moreover, suggests either modifying the Daferner method or the Cherneff et al. method such that it is performed by a system having a processing unit as now defined by claim 1 or modifying the Matsuda et al. device to include a processing unit as now defined by claim 1.

It is respectfully submitted that claim 1 above is patentable for the reasons discussed. Claims 4 and 5, which depend on claim 1, are considered patentable as well for the same reasons.

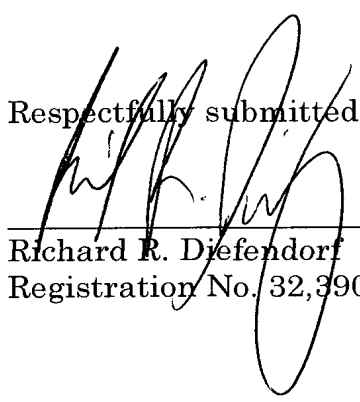
New claim 12 is a method claims, but is considered to contain the essential limitations of previously allowed claim 10. It is respectfully submitted that claim 12 is allowable along with claims 1, 4, 5, and 10. All of the claims in this application, therefore, should now be allowable.

If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #056205.55398US).

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Respectfully submitted,



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